



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lava Beds
National Monument

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Lava Beds National Monument News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lava Beds National Monument Announces Seasonal Cave Opening and Closures

TULELAKE, California— Flowers are beginning to bloom and temperatures are warming up which means the bats at Lava Beds National Monument are beginning to move into their summer roosts and vacate their winter homes (*called hibernacula*). Therefore, Lava Beds invites visitors to come and explore the caves that were closed this winter to protect hibernating bats. The following cave closures have been lifted: Juniper Cave, Hercules Leg Cave, Labyrinth Cave, Lava Brook Cave, and Sentinel Cave. These caves contain long passages, braided tunnels separated by large columns, interesting lava features, high ceilings, and small crawl spaces.

The temporary cave closures are an important component of the National Park Service mission to protect America's resources. Lava Beds is home to 14 species of bats including the Townsend's Big-eared Bat, which is the most studied of the known species within the monument. They are a Species of Special Concern in California because populations are declining throughout most of their range, while steadily growing at Lava Beds. Townsend's Big-eared Bats are very sensitive to human disturbance and have been known to leave their pups if they feel their home has been threatened. For this reason, the following caves have been closed and will be monitored by entry detection equipment and Law Enforcement staff throughout the closure period, which ends approximately October 15, 2015: Ovis & Paradise Alleys Caves, Thunderbolt Cave, Blue Grotto Cave, Natural Bridge Cave, South Labyrinth Cave, Balcony Chamber Cave, and Mitertite Hall Cave. These caves provide warm and dry environments which are ideal for bat maternity colonies. Lava Beds is home to the largest California population of the Townsend's Big-eared Bat and relies on the cave closures to protect this healthy population. Please help us safeguard the wildlife at Lava Beds by respecting the cave closures and reporting any bat sightings to a ranger.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

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Lava Beds National Monument, established in 1925, is a land of turmoil, both geologic and historic. Over the last half-million years, volcanic eruptions have created a rugged landscape dotted with diverse volcanic features. Lava tube caves, Native American sites, historic battlefields and a high desert wilderness experience await you!

For more information about visiting Lava Beds National Monument, call 530-667-8113, email labe_interpretation@nps.gov, or go to www.nps.gov/labe. Also, visit the park's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

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